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## Central Kings student wins 100k Schulich scholarship

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Central Kings Rural High School student Kayla Thomson has earned more than \$100,000 in scholarship money for post-secondary studies. - Ashley Thompson

KENTVILLE - Kayla Thomson's hard work in high school is about to pay off – to the tune of more than \$100,000.

The soon-to-be graduating Central Kings Rural High School student can count herself among the 50 students across Canada selected for a Schulich Leader Scholarship award in 2018.

The organization awards 25 \$80,000 scholarships to students pursuing post-secondary education in science, technology or math on an annual basis, and 25 \$100,000 to students going into engineering.

"Our most promising students can pursue their dreams and become the next global pioneers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," the Schulich Leaders website reads.

"They are innovators. They are Schulich Leaders."

Thomson, an aspiring teacher, won a \$100,000 scholarship to assist with her electrical engineering studies at Dalhousie University - and that's not all. Dalhousie offered Thomson an additional \$20,000 in scholarship money to attend the Halifax-based university.

"I was confident in my essay that I wrote for it but there was only 25 across Canada being given out for what I had applied for, so I didn't think the odds were high," said Thomson, who lives in Kentville.

"My mom was very, very happy – and proud. I'm the first in the family to go to university."

Nova Keddy, a guidance counsellor at Central Kings, said the school's scholarship committee unanimously chose Thomson as the single Schulich scholarship nominee from Central Kings this year.

"She is an incredibly outstanding student and works very hard," said Keddy.

"She really is quite exceptional."

In Thomson's case, exceptional means consistently maintaining a high-90s average throughout high school.

And that's not all.

Thomson's course selection proves she's no slouch: advanced chemistry, physics, pre-cal, calculus and English 12. She excels in science and her favourite subject is math.

"I realized that it was coming naturally when it started to be hard for everybody else," she said, speaking in a matter-of-fact fashion.

"I'm in calculus right now. I've got 100 on everything so far."

The secret to her success is really no secret at all – hard work.

Even if something comes natural to her, Thomson still puts the extra time in to ensure she has a concrete understanding of the subject matter. To prepare for calculus, for example, she completed an AP course online in advance to gain some familiarity with the subject prior to tackling it in high school and university.

"I'm not scared to ask questions. If I don't understand something I will ask and come in for the help until I understand it," she said.

She typically spends two hours per day with her nose in her books outside of class-time to keep on top of her studies. She balances this with helping to care for her younger siblings and working a part-time job.

"A lot of my friends and teachers know that at home I have three little siblings that I've spent a lot of timing looking after and I was also working 20 hours a week at a part-time job," she said.

Winning a sought-after Schulich scholarship despite her busy schedule is a point of pride, Thomson said.

"I definitely learned how to manage my time and keep a good balance."

She hopes her younger siblings see the Schulich recognition as an incentive to work hard in school.

"If you really do put in the effort, there are people that look out and acknowledge you," she said.



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